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National Center for Health Statistics

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New Report on the Nation's Health

Health, United States, 1982 is the seventh annual report submitted to Congress and the President on the status of the Nation's health. The report was compiled by NCHS and contains highlights of findings and detailed statistical tables on four current health topics: health status and determinants, utilization of health resources, health care resources, and health care expenditures.

According to the 1982 report, Americans experienced greater improvements in health than in previous years. The report cites a number of contributing factors: higher life expectancy at birth, continued gains in immunization, a steady decline in infant mortality rates, and an increasing awareness of health promotion and disease prevention efforts.

A feature of this year's report is a chartbook with short discussions describing health concerns specific to various age groups. Other highlights presented in *Health, United States, 1982* include the following:

- Birth rates in the United States have been gradually increasing since 1976. This trend is partly attributed to women over 30 years of age who postponed first births.
- Between 1964 and 1980, physician visits per person per year increased from 3.9 to 5.5 for lower income persons. During the same period, physician visits per person remained stable or actually declined for higher income persons, indicating a marked trend toward equality in the volume of physician visits between the two groups.
- Health care expenditures continued to increase rapidly. In 1981, health care expenditures in the United States totaled $286.6 billion, an average of $1,225 per person, and comprised 9.8 percent of the gross national product.

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